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**After the end of the end  
of History: what Europe should  
learn from the Ukraine crisis for  
its foreign relations.**

Four lessons and a ceterum censeo





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## Abstract

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This paper intends to take a step back from current developments in Ukraine in order to analyze the lessons Europeans ought to draw from the crisis that caught many by surprise. It identifies four issues Europeans need to address in that respect. Whether the Ukrainian crisis really turns out to be a »game changer« in a structural sense remains to be seen, but it has made clear that Europeans should rethink a number of fundamental assumptions underlying European foreign policy. In that sense, the Ukrainian crisis may potentially be a trigger for a process of »strategic maturation,« offering an opportunity to make significant steps toward a European culture of strategic foreign policy making that will allow Europe to overcome some of the obstacles standing in its way when it comes to playing a decisive role in international politics.

The second part of the paper is a summary of the debates at Genshagen Foundation's two day experts' colloquium on »After the end of the end of History? The Ukraine crisis and its strategic implications for Europe« that was held at Genshagen castle on October 16–17, 2014.

## Zusammenfassung

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Sinn und Zweck dieses Genshagener Papiers ist es, einen Schritt zurück zu treten von den aktuellen Entwicklungen in der Ukraine. Es dient dazu zu analysieren, welche Lehre die Europäer aus dieser Krise ziehen sollte, die für viele überraschend kam. Die Autorin identifiziert vier Kernbereiche, über die die Europäer nachdenken müssen. Ob die Ukraine-Krise tatsächlich eine Zeitenwende darstellt, bleibt abzuwarten. Was sie jedoch deutlich gemacht hat ist, dass Europa einige Grundannahmen seiner Außenpolitik überdenken muss. In diesem Sinn kann die Ukraine-Krise zu einem Katalysator für Europas »strategische Reifung« werden und die Chance für die Entwicklung einer tatsächlichen Kultur der strategischen Außenpolitik bieten, mit der Europa die Hürden überwinden kann, die es daran hindern, eine entscheidende Rolle in der internationalen Politik zu spielen.

Der zweite Teil dieses Papiers ist die Zusammenfassung der Diskussion auf der zweitägigen Fachtagung zum Thema »Nach dem Ende vom Ende der Geschichte? Die Ukraine-Krise und ihre strategischen Auswirkungen auf Europa«, welche am 16.–17. Oktober 2014 im Schloss Genshagen stattfand.

# Introduction

In the European Union's immediate vicinity, Russia acts like a revisionist state. In clear violation of all rules the post-Cold War order is built upon, Moscow disregards Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen and others consequently consider the crisis as a »game-changer.« To many Europeans, the 2013/14 crisis in Ukraine that so far culminated in Putin's annexation of Crimea came as a big surprise. As became clear rather quickly, European leaders stood helpless in the face of the most blatant act of revisionism in the post-Cold War era in Europe. Diplomatic efforts, declaratory politics and economic sanctions notwithstanding, neither the Europeans nor the Americans were able to find ways to stop the Russian president. Like in many crises before, the European Union's Common Security and Defense Policy played no role. What is more, other relevant policies such as the European Neighborhood Policy proved to be disconnected from foreign and security policy. Member states' reactions did not always seem to be coordinated. While the events unfolded, the Weimar Triangle appeared on stage at a number of occasions. Yet, unfortunately to no avail: lasting effects of that trilateral engagement are still to emerge. The imposed sanctions notwithstanding, Europe's dealing with the crisis in Ukraine is thus rather unsatisfactory.

As the crisis deepens, the long-bemoaned lack of coherence in approaches to Russia becomes ever more apparent. Reaching consensus within the European Union on more severe sanctions against Russia proved difficult, and sticking to these decisions seems equally challenging. The »Mistral« issue is still not solved in a satisfactory and sustainable manner. On a crucial aspect such as armament deals, EU member

states are divided and act in almost incompatible ways. Besides a more general tendency to exercise restraint, energy and trade matters are the obvious main reasons behind Europeans' reluctance to take a tougher stance – which is hardly surprising given the fact that the EU and Russia are linked by a much higher degree of interdependence than the United States and Russia. Most importantly, however, the past weeks and month have illustrated that the Europeans continue to be unable to deal with security issues in their neighborhood in an autonomous and effective manner.

Whether the Ukrainian crisis really turns out to be a »game changer« in a structural sense remains to be seen. While it is still too early to draw final conclusions from the ongoing crisis, a number of insights may, however, be drawn for European foreign policy. These insights first and foremost pertain to Europe and its outlook on the world as such, given that the crisis – and European reactions to it – has (again) revealed a number of patterns that continue to characterize the EU, its member states and their approach to foreign policy making. These insights are thus not so much about Russia, or even Russia as a *sui generis* phenomenon, but about Europeans' worldview and its implications for Europe's acting on the international scene. Most importantly, the events unfolding in Ukraine should make clear that the most »traditional« dimension of security can still be at stake in the 21st century, on the European continent and in countries directly bordering the EU.

Within that context, the Ukrainian crisis may potentially be a trigger for a process of »strategic maturation« in a wide sense, offering an opportunity to make significant steps toward a European culture of

# I.

## Getting paradigms right

strategic foreign policy making that will allow Europe to overcome some of the obstacles standing in its way when it comes to playing a decisive role in international politics. The remainder of this paper is intended to identify a number of fundamental issues Europeans need to address in that respect.



As much as the Ukraine crisis may have come as a surprise for observers and practitioners, events like these could in reality never be excluded. Europeans' inability to foresee revisionist acts on Russia's part stems, in large parts, from Europe's being trapped in its own discourses: after the end of the Cold War, hard power and the evil dynamics of geopolitics were widely said to be things of the past. Thinking in terms of spheres of influence was largely considered to be obsolete, as the world – or at least Europe – is thought to have entered some sort of post-modernist era in which states (or unions of states) act as »normative powers,« practice the »export of values« and make use of so-called »soft power« as their main instrument of foreign policy.

The first mistake, in that context, consists of confounding these discourses with some sort of objective »truth,« overlooking the fact that this truth was ever only proclaimed unilaterally. The second mistake directly following from the first then consists of failing to understand that EU and NATO expansion may in fact very well be viewed in geopolitical terms. In other words, they are not necessarily to be seen as the proliferation of the »right« values and thus not only harmless, but actually »good.« As a matter of fact, these expansions do indeed fit nicely into two very different discourses – both seeming perfectly logical from their respective proponents' vantage points: they square with both the post-modernist discourse *and* with approaches that look at international politics

- The EU and NATO enlargements square with both the post-modernist discourse *and* with approaches that look at international politics through the geopolitical lens.

through the geopolitical lens. In short, the eastward expansion of both NATO and the EU can as much be considered an accession of more states to an area ruled by specific norms and values as it can be seen as the extension of the Western sphere of influence. Believing that Russia would not mind the expansion of a »bloc« it perceives as threatening just because that bloc claims to be a force of good was shortsighted, egocentric and even arrogant. This is of course not to say that Russia is »right« or that the annexation of Crimea was legitimate. Simply saying that the »West« has caused this crisis through its own behavior is going too far (be it only because monocausality is a scarce phenomenon in international relations).<sup>1</sup> Yet, taking the other's point of view into consideration is the key to any successful strategy. Narcissistic beliefs in one's own moral superiority or righteousness, in turn, tend to stand in the way of good strategy formulation. Western leaders' failure to understand the rationale of Russian strategic thinking is the logical consequence of the above. Simply explaining Russian foreign policy by Putin's »irrationality« is proof of a lack of insight. It is for that reason that the current crisis has taken so many by genuine surprise.<sup>2</sup>

The first lesson Europeans may learn from this crisis is therefore that others' intentions and behavior are best understood when analyzing the world through their paradigms. The assumption that European – or

perhaps more broadly Western – paradigms are »right« and universal merely stands in the way of strategic foreign policy making. This does of course not mean that the European Union should stop to promote its values. Promoting values, however, is merely a foreign policy objective and cannot be the starting point for strategic analysis, unless running the obvious risk of reasoning in circles. In the upcoming multipolar international system and in light of the United States' ever more palpable Pacific pivot, it is all the more important that Europeans understand this lesson.



<sup>1</sup> Although these discourses obviously exist on the right and especially left fringes of European public opinion, notably in Germany (Die Linke). For a position derived from (offensive) neorealist theory of international relations, see also John Mearsheimer, »Why the Ukraine crisis is the West's fault,« Foreign Affairs, August 18, 2014. Mearsheimer suggests a neutral Ukraine to solve the issue.

<sup>2</sup> By the way, one should also be careful when it comes to explaining the future with past paradigms, as not all paradigms endure over time. The talk about a »new cold war« must therefore be examined very critically: a return of bipolarity is hardly likely in today's international system. Therefore, the continued salience of geopolitics and the Cold War are two different things that are not linked by any causal relationship. Instruments and solutions from the bipolar 1970s and 1980s have therefore little chance to »work« in both the current situation and years to come.

## II. Define priorities

From a Russian perspective, NATO and EU expansions are – rightly or not – perceived as threatening, as developments that justify and require Russia's reaction. What follows in the concrete case at hand is that seeking a »Western« Ukraine and partnership with Russia amounts to having the cake and eating it too. At least in the foreseeable future, both options are simply not on the table. Whether Europeans like it or not, they have engaged in a type of game that Russia perceives as a zero-sum game – and Moscow plays accordingly. For that reason, Europe will have to make a choice and define priorities. At the same time, it will need to find a way out of the game's being dictated by Russia. Put very bluntly and in overly simplistic terms, Europeans will need to decide which of the two countries, Russia or Ukraine, they want to bet on right now and to what degree of proximity and cooperation this should lead. These priorities will also have repercussions on the EU's (as well as NATO's) general approach to its Eastern neighborhood. What is valid for Ukraine in this context is, to a large extent, also valid for the other Eastern Partnership countries. In any case, staying ambiguous on membership perspectives does not amount to having a strategy.

Priorities need, however, not only be formulated in terms of countries. They must also be formulated in terms of characteristics to be achieved for the environment Europe evolves in – that is, meaning what Arnold Wolfers qualified as »milieu goals.« Such priorities may include features like stability, firmly rooted democratic political systems or territorial integrity. As intertwined as all these things may be, and as convincing the line of argument that they mutually are each other's prerequisite is: in the current situation, achieving all of these goals simultaneously is beyond reach. Stability and Ukraine's

territorial integrity, for instance, exclude each other at the time being (assuming that Crimea should be a part of Ukraine, that is). This is the way policy makers must rethink current approaches to Europe's vicinity: the official European Neighborhood Policy is indeed full of milieu goals. What it lacks is however the idea of prioritization as well as an understanding of the fact that these milieu goals may also be opposed by actors (read: great powers) beyond the countries targeted. It consequently does not contain any notion of what to do in situations like the current situation.

Such prioritizations are no nice thing to do. The preferred scenario would, of course, imply having the cake and eating it too. Yet, making choices is unavoidable. And at least implicitly, EU member states have already made up their minds on priorities. Further upsetting Russia is something everyone seems very reluctant to do, and nobody seriously considers »real« military support for Ukraine. What is crucial, though, for Europe to act in a coherent and at least potentially effective manner is to be on the same page when it comes to priorities. The second lesson thus amounts to reconsidering the Eastern Partnership, and in particular the membership perspectives offered – or not – to partner countries. In so doing, the whole picture must be considered, including the geopolitical dimension beyond the EU-partner country bilateralism.



### III.

## Time to reconsider interdependence – and take advantage of inherent opportunities

In many ways, the history of European integration is the history of creating interdependence among former enemies in order to achieve peace. Accordingly, among the (oftentimes implicit) assumptions behind European foreign policy making after 1991 is the notion that increased interdependence will increase security and stability. The recipe that proved successful in starting and deepening European integration is thence to be applied in external relations. Engaging with Russia for the sake of engagement has been a key objective for several decades. Now that the EU members' dependence on Russia, in particular when it comes to its energy supply, is an essential factor in explaining Europe's inability to respond with measures that actually hurt, it may be worth reconsidering these assumptions. Instead of fostering peace and understanding, interdependence may in fact also lead to vulnerability and tie actors' hands.

At closer look, the proponents of interdependence are mainly to be found among the big, »old« EU member states – and one in particular. Smaller and newer member states, in turn, look back on historical trajectories that give them little reason to trust Russia. From that perspective, seeking interdependence seems like a foolish thing to do. (Polish energy policy, for instance, has generally been designed accordingly.) An intra-European debate on underlying views on Moscow and their implications for strategy formulation has yet never really taken place, let alone reached any conclusion. As it now turns out, the skeptics may have had a point. Disagreement within the EU as to Russia's very nature has weakened the Union's ability to act toward Moscow and allowed Russia a great deal of leverage

it would not have had had it not been able to play a game of *divide et impera* with uncoordinated Europeans.<sup>3</sup>

Assuming that Russia no longer qualifies (or, for some, perhaps never qualified) as a reliable partner and that profound disagreement on the very principles states' conduct of foreign policy should be based upon characterize the relationship, being dependent on Moscow might indeed not be such a good idea. Many European states however depend on Russia for their energy supply; some even cover 100 % of their energy needs with Russian imports. For many Central European member states, Russia is moreover an important trading partner. Cutting ties with Moscow is thus an option that causes pain in many ways. Reducing (inter)dependence need, however, not amount to cutting all ties. A sector-based approach, making a distinction between apples and frigates, may be a good compromise.<sup>4</sup> It merely decreases Moscow's potential to create havoc in Western economies. At the same time, deeper integration with more (politically) reliable partners may help to mitigate some of the consequences.<sup>5</sup>

Notably in the field of energy policy, reducing dependence on Russia has far-reaching implications way beyond the bilateral relationship: geostrategic, political at domestic levels, economic and industrial, as well as technological and in the field of research and development. The less energy Europe consumes, the better. The more Europe is able to cover its energy needs

<sup>3</sup> See i.a. Mark Leonhard and Nicu Popescu (2007) *A power audit of EU-Russia relations*. European Council of Foreign Relations Policy Paper, available at [http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR-02\\_A\\_POWER\\_AUDIT\\_OF\\_EU-RUSSIA\\_RELATIONS.pdf](http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR-02_A_POWER_AUDIT_OF_EU-RUSSIA_RELATIONS.pdf). More recent research comes to similar findings, hence indicating that little has changed since the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force.

<sup>4</sup> Also bearing in mind that e.g. the French Mistral deal was already heavily criticized for geostrategic reasons when it all began in 2009. The Baltic states were against it, while e.g. Swedish (military) voices qualified it as »bad news for Sweden.«

<sup>5</sup> This may, by the way, be another case in point for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (see below).

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autonomously, the better. The Polish proposal of an Energy Union therefore goes in the right direction.<sup>6</sup> Bundling EU member's weight and influence vis-à-vis Russia would reduce Moscow's leverage – provided that Europeans really find a way to speak with one voice.

However, the present crisis is also the occasion to come up with a true European Energy Strategy, and a strategy that looks at the whole picture. In an ideal world, the current crisis could serve as a starting point for a holistic and sustainable European energy policy. The document published by the European Commission in May 2014<sup>7</sup> (which to prepare it was tasked at the March Council) is a start, but concrete steps (and allocated funds) need to follow. Any attempts at reducing energy dependence on Russia must therefore be complemented by true efforts to take the climate and ecological sustainability dimension into account. Research and development to that end should therefore be at the center of attention, with increased joint European efforts. In the long term, attempts at reducing Europe's dependence on Russian energy should also trigger decisive steps toward more energy-efficient and thus

climate-friendly ways of industrial production and energy consumption. In light of the evident consequences of climate change, this is clearly not the worst thing that can happen. Moreover, making a leap forward in sustainable energy production is way more than simply altruistic: besides boosting the EU's credibility in multilateral settings (such as direly needed climate negotiations), technologies developed are almost guaranteed to become export hits. Once again, the issue is thus about setting the right priorities – based on long-term perspectives that take more than just the issue immediately at hand into account. This would, however, not only imply dealing with diverging national positions and interest. It would also require overcoming institutional boundaries at EU level.



<sup>6</sup> A proposal that is not new: already after the 2005/6 gas crisis, Poland proposed a so-called »Energy NATO« based on solidarity and common reserves. The real NATO, in turn, has included the disruption of energy supplies as a risk in its strategic concept since 1999. Yet, energy security has never truly been dealt with at NATO, hence indicating that little has changed since the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force.

<sup>7</sup> European Commission (2014) *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and Council. European Energy Strategy*. COM(2014) 330 final, Brussels, 28 May. Available at [http://ec.europa.eu/energy/doc/20140528\\_energy\\_security\\_communication.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/doc/20140528_energy_security_communication.pdf).

## IV.

# The transatlantic link remains crucial

As events in Ukraine have made clear, the transatlantic reflex is still firmly anchored in many capitals. The Baltic States and Poland in particular immediately called for both short- and long-term measures by NATO, asking for reassurance and support. The Alliance and its members responded with a number of measures aimed at the Eastern allies' reassurance, increasing staff numbers and means deployed (e.g. for air policing in the Baltic region). Yet, they are unwilling to meet all demands made. For a number of reasons, permanently stationed troops East of Germany are not on NATO's general agenda (not least due to the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act that prohibits such a move).<sup>8</sup>

Europe's collective defense remains NATO's business and, absent any alternative, this is bound to stay that way for quite some time to come. CSDP has not been created to that effect, although the Treaty of Lisbon does not exclude territorial defense from becoming a task in the future. NATO and its representatives may have been criticized for their crisis management, and sometimes rightly so. Yet, although NATO may not (hopefully) have a direct role to play in ongoing developments in Ukraine, its indirect role clearly matters, not least psychologically. NATO membership as such has a reassuring effect on both policy makers and the population in many countries. Article V is moreover likely to make Putin think twice before attempting to »protect« Russian minorities in other countries, for instance in the Baltic states. Equally important to many Central and Eastern Europeans is the United States' bilateral engagement in the region. Given the current state of

CSDP, the European Union on its own is simply unable to provide the degree of reassurance required by Warsaw or Tallinn. For a number of reasons, nobody else but NATO (and especially its key member) is able to play that role.

What Europe thus should learn from this crisis is that the transatlantic link remains indispensable. Severe problems, such as spying affairs, notwithstanding, there simply is no alternative to a close transatlantic partnership. This is the background against which Europeans should approach, for instance, the negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) – and convey the message to its mostly reluctant citizens. Closer (trade) links with the United States may moreover help mitigate the consequences of diminished trade volumes with Russia. Most importantly, however, this is what Europeans should bear in mind when thinking about burden sharing within the Atlantic Alliance.

The fourth lesson drawn from the crisis in Ukraine therefore consists of understanding the continued core relevance of the transatlantic link. On a more fundamental level, however, Europeans should take changes in U.S. Grand Strategy seriously. This also includes the consequences these changes entail for Europe – and these consequences do indeed seem to be widely underestimated. Yet, the Pacific Pivot will not remain without implications for European security. Less U.S. focus on Europe will require more European engagement for its own security – including hard security,

<sup>8</sup> The presence of NATO troops in Central and Eastern Europe is called for on a regular basis by representatives from the respective member states, and notably during the meeting of nine presidents of the region in Warsaw on 22 July 2014, see [www.president.pl/en/news/news/art,668,presidents-in-favour-of-strengthening-natos-eastern-flank.html](http://www.president.pl/en/news/news/art,668,presidents-in-favour-of-strengthening-natos-eastern-flank.html). The 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act stipulates that »NATO reiterates that in the current and foreseeable security environment, the Alliance will carry out its collective defence and other missions by ensuring the necessary interoperability, integration, and capability for reinforcement rather than by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces.«

## In lieu of a conclusion: ceterum censeo ...

given that Russia's annexation of Crimea should have made very clear that territorial defense is anything but obsolete, even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Unsurprisingly, burden sharing has thus come to the fore again during the current crisis, as numerous statements by for instance NATO's Secretary General illustrate. Rasmussen's calls have even had some effect in European member states, as some allies agreed to moderate increases in their defense spending. These measures notwithstanding, the overall debate on the transatlantic bargain is of course far from settled. Europe should actively seek that debate and provide real answers – first and foremost for its own sake.



The frustrating thing about European foreign policy is: very little of what has been written above is new. Most of it has been said before, independent from the events unfolding in Ukraine. Yet, what is happening in that neighboring country has (again), like a magnifying glass, revealed the shortcomings of EU external action. Once more, the crisis in Ukraine has shown that for Europe to matter in world affairs, concerted action is a prerequisite. That concerted action, in turn, must be based on compatible (if not shared) strategic visions and priorities. The conclusion to be drawn is thus anything but original: Europeans need to get their act together, in foreign and security policy as well as in other relevant fields. Many of the measures proposed in the crisis' context have been on the table for a longer period of time. What lacked was the impetus to take to action and overcome petty obstacles. The Ukrainian crisis may perhaps serve as a wake-up call.

As noted above, the four lessons in the end all pertain to Europe's strategic maturity – or, in fact, lack thereof. Unless Europeans manage to define strategic priorities and agree on them and on how to pursue them, the EU will have a hard time to come up with viable and effective solutions to the Ukraine crisis. What is worse, similar crises cannot be excluded for the future, while U.S. support will be less certainly available. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that Ukraine is not the only crisis unfolding in Europe's periphery: Iraq, Syria and more unrest in the Middle East clearly the potential to worry Europeans – who are much closer to these regions than their American allies.<sup>9</sup>

Within that context, and given the United Kingdom's increasing difficulties to play a constructive role within the EU, the Weimar Triangle countries would have a

<sup>9</sup> On a side note, it is also interesting to bear in mind that not only is the United States farther away from these regions, but the BP Energy Outlook moreover predicts that the US is »on the path to achieve energy self-sufficiency.« Cf. [http://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/pdf/Energy-economics/Energy-Outlook/Energy\\_Outlook\\_2035\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/pdf/Energy-economics/Energy-Outlook/Energy_Outlook_2035_booklet.pdf), p. 5.

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potentially crucial role to play: not only in hands-on crisis management, but especially when it comes to providing leadership in working toward greater European strategic maturity. Needless to say, Germany, France and Poland (as well as any other European or Western actor) should undertake every effort possible to solve the current crisis. Yet, they should also take advantage of what is in it for Europe internally, following the worn-out dictum that every crisis also comprises opportunities. The three countries would indeed be able to bring three rather distinct strategic cultures to the table, shaped by three distinct historical itineraries, geopolitical positions and regional priorities. Combining them in a way that amounts to more than just the smallest common denominator may well provide a basis for a true European strategic vision – or at least a debate on it to start with. If the Weimar Triangle succeeds in this endeavor, it may eventually be able to help bridging the leadership gap the European Union's common foreign and security policy is suffering from.

However, Europeans will also need to find answers short of devising a European Grand Strategy. From reforming the Eastern Partnership's toolbox to finding a viable, European solution to the »Mistral«-issue, the to-do list is long. On these questions too, Europe will need more leadership than in the past. Leading the way in drawing conclusions from the current crisis for the future of European integration is a noble task few formats could as effectively take on as the Weimar Triangle.



On October 16–17, 2014, an experts' workshop on »After the end of the end of History: The Ukraine crisis and its strategic implications for Europe« was held at Genshagen Castle in order to analyze the current situation and the conclusions the European Union and its member states ought to draw from it. More than forty experts, analysts and diplomats from the Weimar Triangle countries and beyond gathered at Genshagen Castle for an exchange that lasted two days. Topics addressed covered the future of EU-Russia relations, security and energy policy as well as the European Neighborhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership.

The point of departure for all analyses – as well as the red thread to remain the underlying assumption during all subsequent discussion – was the assertion that the policies hitherto led vis-à-vis Russia essentially failed. Europe's »policy of engagement« has not yielded the expected results, and a thorough review is consequently in order. This appraisal was shared by Polish, German and French representatives alike and never seriously challenged throughout the workshop. As one participant put it, the EU's attempt at expanding the area governed by its values and principles was met with tanks and weapons, based on a clear geostrategic agenda. Although the EU and Western governments framed their approaches as win-win-scenarios, Russia has chosen to reject that logic. The West's belief in its logic's salience, in turn, was also qualified as naïve. Under such circumstances, where external spoilers act out against reform and elites in the »target country« are fragmented, the EU's approach to promoting transformation in its neighborhood can simply not work. This is the point where conditionality reaches its limits. The remaining paradox nevertheless is that while Europe perceives itself as being too weak, Russia reacts to the threat posed by the West's strength.

- The remaining paradox nevertheless is that while Europe perceives itself as being too weak, Russia reacts to the threat posed by the West's strength.

Reasons for the failure of European *Ostpolitik* are mainly to be found within Russia itself. Domestic developments (or perhaps rather: the lack thereof) push President Putin to pursue a foreign policy that is incompatible with the West's. Instead of seeking stability and cooperation, Russia aims at destabilizing its environment and eventually establishing a new order. In short, Russia currently defines its future in opposition to the West. Given that these foreign policy objectives are the result of internal Russian developments, they are almost impossible to influence from outside. For that reason, Europeans must understand that their »traditional« approach to *Ostpolitik* that aims at engaging Moscow is no longer a viable option. For most participants, Russia's revisionist stance must therefore constitute the point of departure for EU Russian policies during the years and decades to come. Russia no longer qualifies as a partner, and European policies must be guided by both what is desirable and what is possible. In this context, Europe must also become more strategic in its approaches, realizing that difficult political matters cannot be treated as technicalities in order to make them easier to handle. Within the context of the crisis, the sanctions imposed on Moscow were seen in different light by the participants: from the »first use of power politics on the EU's part« to simply being the wrong tool for the situation at hand, unanimity could not be achieved. Time will likely need to show their effectiveness.

In the field of security, the crisis in Ukraine has to some extent brought about a return to the basics. Europeans realized that territorial defense is of continued relevance (a point most saliently made on the Polish side). Although Russia is not yet qualified as a »threat« or even an »adversary« in official summit declarations, it is also evident in this field that cooperative approaches toward Russia are unrealistic at this point, as e.g. became apparent at NATO's September 2014 Wales

Summit. The stationing of permanent troops – contrary to the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act – was yet discussed controversially. Unsurprisingly, such a move was mainly advocated by Polish participants. Notably from the German side, arguments put forward also underlined the interpretation that the current disagreements with Russia are not primarily a military conflict. Consequently, it was also emphasized various times that the crisis does not have a military solution. In terms of institutions, the events in Ukraine have shown that the European Union and its Common Security Policy does not really have a role to play – much to some participants' exasperation. NATO, but to some extent also the OSCE, were deemed to be better suited to deal with the situation. The former's role would of course not consist of direct intervention, but rather of continued reassurance for allies on the Eastern flank. The OSCE, in this context, was not viewed as an instrument apt to solve conflicts, but as a valuable forum for discussion.

In the field of energy policy, it is self-evident that Europe will continue to depend on imports. Given that gas exports are not merely an economic tool for Moscow, but also a political instrument, energy interdependence with Russia is not unproblematic. While European gas stocks are sufficiently well filled for the upcoming winter, energy autarky is of course beyond reach. As a consequence, the debate must be on diversification and the creation of infrastructures required for increased European cooperation. Europe must see to creating the geographic, political and technical prerequisites for reducing its vulnerability. To that end, it must develop its infrastructure, introduce a solidarity mechanism, diversify its supply, use its own resources, and strengthen its position vis-à-vis suppliers. In addition, some voices called for extending the so-called 3rd energy package to also include Ukraine. The Polish proposal of an »Energy

Union« was widely welcomed, yet some doubts were voiced with respect to joint acquisition (deemed incompatible with market rules).

The red thread of Europe's need for more strategy was finally also visible when discussions addressed the matter of the EU's approaches toward its Eastern Neighborhood West of Russia. Brussel's attempts at framing the Eastern Partnership as a »technical policy« were unanimously deemed to have failed. The fact that it moreover is conducted as being separate from both foreign policy and »Russia policies« was heavily criticized and viewed as a structural shortcoming. In addition, its lack of differentiation among the »target countries« contributed to the unfavorable analysis. Yet, all panelists also agreed on the fact that it should not be judged unfairly under the current circumstances: the Eastern Partnership being a structural policy, it is by definition not the instrument of choice when it comes to crisis management as it has never been designed to that effect. This is also one of the fields where »constructive ambiguity« has clearly reached its limits. Dodging the issue of membership perspectives has, some argued, turned out to be a liability rather than a positive move – although some argued that an explicit perspective for e.g. Ukraine to join the EU would have led to even harsher Russian reactions. These are consequently questions to be addressed during the ENP's upcoming review, along with priorities and the »one size fits all«-approach as opposed to dove-tailed solutions for the various countries concerned.

In sum, the experts' workshop's results may thus be subsumed under three main ideas, all pertaining to the larger strategic dimension of the Ukrainian crisis:

1) Russia is no longer a partner. Internal developments in the country push Moscow to pursuing a policy that is incompatible with Western values and that the

West must not accept. Policies intended to »engage« Russia are consequently obsolete at this point in time.

- 2) Europe must become more strategic. With respect to its Ostpolitik, the EU can no longer escape from dealing with the »big« strategic issues by framing its Eastern Partnership (and the European Neighborhood Policy in general) as a simple technicality. Doing so was a major mistake that should be corrected in the future. Moreover, the EU will need to come up with a true strategy with respect to Russia that goes beyond naively believing in win-win-situations but accepts the fact that Moscow reasons differently.
- 3) Channels for discussion with Russia must be kept open. Russian interests are at least complementary with European interests. Open confrontation – also short of military confrontation – is in no-one's interest. Complementarity especially exists in the field of energy policy, where the EU is as dependent on covering its needs through imports as Russia is on exporting oil and gas.

As far as Ukraine is concerned, the EU and its member states will have to define priorities. Participants widely agreed that Ukraine should receive all the support possibly short of military intervention. Yet, the task at hand is momentous: it is not with the means of the Eastern Partnership that »Kyiv will become the new Warsaw.« Europeans will consequently have to think about what they want to achieve, as well as about what they can achieve – in terms of resources, but also in terms of Russian opposition. Within that context, the role potentially to be played by the Weimar Triangle was underlined on various occasions: when it comes to dealing with Russia, Germany, France and Poland indeed represent a »condensate of all possible positions when it comes to deciding what we do with Russia.«



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